Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

land in January to study *Welwitschia* and get material for further investigation. In the same letter he writes: "I don't think there is the least chance for peace before September, 1917. I wish I could get away from present occupations and take a part, but I am not encouraged by the authorities."

Five years ago, while studying cycads in South Africa, it was my good fortune to become acquainted with Professor PEARSON, and to be entertained in his home. He was a vigorous, kindly man, intensely interested in his work and enthusiastic over the botanical possibilities of South Africa. During a stroll on Table Mountain he pointed out to me a magnificent site for a botanical garden, at that time only a dream or a vision; but with him a vision was followed by meditation, and then by determined effort to make his dream come true. The visions which he saw during such strolls have materialized in the National Botanic Gardens at Cape Town, with an unsurpassed location, and with such a rapidly growing collection of plants that the place is already one of the great gardens of the world.

By his untimely death—he was only 46 years old—science has lost a great botanist, but it is to be hoped that his high ideals of scientific work will still remain to guide the botanical policies of South Africa.—CHARLES J. CHAMBERLAIN, *University of Chicago.*

SOIL MOISTURE INDEX

Outdoor botanists in thinking of any plant are likely to associate with it some measure of its soil moisture relation. The terms xerophyte, mesophyte, and hydrophyte naturally come to mind, or at least the conceptions that these names connote. With college students, however, no such association of ideas is likely to occur unless special attention is directed to the subject. This may be done by requiring the student to examine the habitat, note the associated species, and estimate the water requirements. Such a plan was tried the past summer at the University of Colorado Mountain Laboratory at Tolland, Colorado. For this purpose a scale, which may be called a "soil moisture index," proved useful. A rule of the laboratory required that every plant studied should be recorded with an index number, this to be criticized and perhaps altered by the instructor.

The index numbers form a scale from 1 to 10 with the following significance: (1) lithophytes; (2) plants of driest, sterile soil; (3) hyperxerophytes; (4) xerophytes; (5) xero-mesophytes; (6) mesophytes;

(7) plants of wet meadows or moist forest; (8) marsh plants; (9) plants partly submersed; (10) plants growing in water.

In using the index most plants will be grouped around 4, 6, 8, and 10. This will be the case especially with students who have had little experience in field work. Later, when a finer discrimination is developed, the intermediate numbers will be employed more often. If extreme nicety is desired, decimals may be used. They will be satisfactory in the study of some particular community, as a meadow or a prairie, in which the student becomes acquainted with relative moisture requirements of a number of species. If less accuracy is required, plus and minus signs furnish a useful means of distinction. Thus, the elms may be called no. 6, the red maple 6+, and the red oak 6−. Students in desert and arid regions will need to work out the meanings of the index figures 2 and 3. Others will probably be content with calling all xerophytes no. 4. A plant that occurs in a number of different habitats may be indicated by two or more numbers, as, for example, *Achillaea lanulosa* 6, 7, 8.

There is no deep philosophical conception underlying the use of the scale and no instrumentation is intended in connection with it. It merely emphasizes the importance of water in the substratum and furnishes a suitable terminology for description and a vocabulary for thinking about soil moisture relations. It is possible that in research work on floristics the use of this or some other suitable scale may be found desirable. Perhaps workers in different localities might agree on typical plants to represent the different index numbers. The scale may well be used for a better understanding of transition areas, such as occur between meadow and marsh or between meadow and dry grassland. Any piece of vegetation may be given an index number if the indexes of its component species (previously determined in other situations) be averaged. Thus one might recognize a no. 6 meadow, a no. 6.5 meadow, or a no. 7 meadow.—FRANCIS RAMALEY, *University of Colorado, Boulder, Colorado.*